

- comprise a top wall, a bottom wall, side walls, and a rear wall, and wherein each wall and the flap comprises pliable fabric layers with thermal insulation contained between said pliable fabric layers;
- (b) placing a thermal storage assembly within said sub-chamber between the bottom wall and the cover within said interior volume for providing a sub-chamber, said thermal storage assembly comprising:
- (i) a heat retention member for absorbing and retaining heat and for releasing said heat over extended periods of time;
 - (ii) a heating coil assembly in thermally conductive contact with said heat retention member;
 - (iii) a sealed container for containing said heat retention member and said heating coil; and
 - (iv) a power cord for providing electrical connectivity between a power source and said heating coil, said power cord extending into said sealed container; [and]
- (c) heating the thermal storage assembly within the sub-chamber by energizing the heating coil by providing [electrical connectivity] alternating current between the power source and the heating coil via the power cord; and
- (d) placing a box containing cooked pizza within said interior volume by moving said box containing cooked pizza through said opening for accessing said interior volume.

REMARKS

The above Amendment cancels claims 27 and 28, and introduces the feature of cancelled claim 27 into claim 20. Accordingly, no new matter or new issues are introduced by this amendment. Entry of this Amendment is requested.

Applicants' below-named representative would like to thank Examiner Joseph Pelham for the helpful and courteous discussion of the issues in this application held on January 25, 2001. This discussion focused on the feature of claim 20 providing for heating the thermal storage assembly by alternating current while the thermal storage assembly is provided within the sub-chamber. It was pointed out that this feature is advantageous because it provides a method for transporting cooked pizza without having to move the thermal storage assembly from inside the case to outside the case every time the thermal storage assembly is charged. It is

desirable to avoid having to move the thermal storage assembly into the sub-chamber when it is hot to avoid burning the person handling the thermal storage assembly, and it is advantageous to avoid having to move the thermal storage assembly into and out of the sub-chamber in order to save time. According to the invention, the thermal storage assembly is heated while it is provided within the sub-chamber of the case.

Claims 20-35 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 5,454,471 to Norvell and U.S. Patent No. 5,750,962 to Hyatt. This rejection is traversed.

Norvell describes a container for transporting food, such as pizza. A container for delivering individual pizzas is depicted by Figure 1 and a container for large-scale delivery of pizzas is depicted by Figure 4. Norvell further describes the use of a temperature maintenance device including a sealed packet 80 containing a phase change material 82. See Norvell at column 7, lines 21-28. Norvell teaches activating the phase change material by placing the temperature maintenance device in a microwave oven. See Norvell at column 7, lines 51-63. In addition, Norvell mentions the use of battery or fuel powered heating elements at column 8, lines 8-13.

The claimed invention provides a method for transporting cooked pizza wherein the thermal storage assembly containing a heating coil is heated by providing alternating current between the heating coil and a power source while the thermal storage assembly is providing within the sub-chamber of the case for transporting pizza. It is submitted that Norvell fails to describe or suggest heating the disclosed sealed packet 80 while the sealed packet 80 is provided within the container. In fact, if the sealed packet 80 is heated by microwave energy, it is expected that the sealed packet 80 would be heated in a microwave oven provided outside of the disclosed container for delivering pizzas.

It is submitted that Hyatt fails to cure the defects identified above with respect to Norvell, and that one having ordinary skill in the art would not have received the suggestion from Hyatt to modify Norvell to replace the sealed packet 80 described by Norvell with a thermal storage assembly having a heating coil and providing an alternating current for energizing the heating coil while the thermal storage assembly is provided within a sub-chamber of a case for delivering pizza.

In view of the above comments, withdrawal of the outstanding rejection is requested.

It is pointed out that there is a typographical error on page 3 of the Amendment mailed to the United States Patent and Trademark Office on September 7, 2000. At line 19, the phrase "cooled pizza" should be "cooked pizza." It is further clarified that the claimed method provides for heating the thermal storage assembly by alternating current when the thermal storage assembly is provided within the sub-chamber of the case for transporting pizza. According to the claimed method, a cooked pizza may or may not be provided within the case for delivering pizza during the heating of the thermal storage assembly.

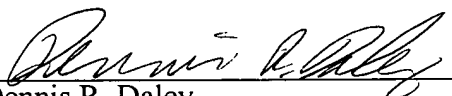
It is believed that this application is in condition for allowance. Early notice to this effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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